

## Coordinator's Report November 9, 2023



### ***The Holidays Approach!***

The Holidays are approaching fast! I am finally getting in the groove of a real work schedule after a lazy summer. I hope you are all doing well too.

#### **Council Changes:**

We are having some Council member changes. Thanks so much to those Council members who have served their term and are now moving on. Your time and commitment is so appreciated by the fellow Board members as well as the community we serve. Members leaving the Council:

- Asher Edelson
- Rocko Gieselman
- Marlena Hughes
- Robin Ingenthron
- Sarah Lauderville
- Cara Sachs
- Sarah Sterling
- Calla Papademas

We are also pleased to be welcoming new members to the Council. We have added a HireAbility Counselor and now are pleased to have two HA Counselors on our Council. We are still pending the recruitment of another Business Industry, and Labor Representative. Although being official includes the appointment by the Governor, these are the new Council Members waiting for their appointment including their membership role:

- Jacqueline Kelley, Council at large
- Brandy Reynolds, HA Counselor
- Abby Levinsohn, Council at large
- Tara Shatney, HA Counselor
- Joseph Soares, Council at large
- Emily Wagner, State Educational Agency
- Amanda Wheeler, State Workforce Development Board

### **Governor's Office**

The oversight of the appointments to state Boards has had some changes. There is a (somewhat) new person who is the coordinator for the appointments, Tela Torrey. She has worked hard to update and organize the gubernatorial appointments. One result of the changes in her office is a change to the terms of those appointments. Previously, the end of a term was based on the end of a program year and was 9/30 of the appropriate year. This gave us the end of program year to address all recruitment needs for that year. Starting last year, the end of each person's term is based on the date that appointment certificate was signed by the governor. That means all new appointments, as of last year, will have term end dates that fall throughout the program year.

### **Required Roles**

The laws that govern our Council membership are defined by the federal government. I'd like to review a couple requirements:

- More than half of the Council members must have an identified disability. Currently this is determined by the application that is completed for the Council. There is a section at the end of the application that asks applicants to identify several things including, "Person with a Disability" and answers yes or no. The number of people answering yes is used to determine if we meet this requirement.
- There are several "Roles" that the Council must have in its membership. This is separate from the question of disability- one can have a disability and fill a role. The Roles and number required is as follows:
  1. Business, Industry, Labor Representative. (4) We must have four members in this role.
  2. Client Assistance Program Representative (1)
  3. Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider (1)
  4. Current or Former VR Applicant or Recipient (1)
  5. Disability Group Representative (1)
  6. Parent Training and Information Center Representative (1)
  7. State Education Agency (1)

8. State Workforce Development Board (1)
9. Statewide Independent Living Council Representative (1)
10. HA Counselor (1)
11. Designated State Unit Director (1)

We can have multiple people in each role, but there is the minimum number we must have that is listed after the role. We must have a minimum of 15 Council members.

## **Annual Retreat**

We held our first Hybrid Annual Retreat. Thank you everyone for your patience as we worked out the bugs. It was great to finally meet some of you in person! The next year priorities for each Committee were identified:

### Advocacy, Outreach and Education:

1. Promote access for students and adults to educations and training that leads to credentials and higher wage jobs (dual enrollment in schools and CTOs for adults).
2. Market DIF DVBI grant to improve transition services for youth.
3. Educate Vermonters policy makers, etc. on Our Time is Now Time report re: people with chronic health conditions.
4. Advocacy for rural transportation solutions.
5. Educate on the value of remote work and asynchronous training for people with disabilities to allow maximum flexibility for work and training.
6. Educate Vermonters on Long Covid.

### Policies & Procedures

1. Transportation to update the spending guidelines
2. Separate the rehab technology policy chapter into two separate chapters. One for home modifications and one for assistive technology
3. Review and revise any chapter from 2009 or older
4. The family services chapter is currently under review
5. How do we create an environment for meaningful input without crushing great ideas we can't move forward with because of state or federal regulations?
  - o Review the policy as it stands as a committee first and share initial thoughts. Then James and Sherri draft the revisions based on feedback, regulations, and trends from the field. Lastly, the committee reviews the draft together and shares final input before finalizing

- Is there a way we can use data to impact what policies the P&P committee prioritizes? For example, how many HireAbility participants receive financial support related to transportation?

Performance Review:

1. Complete the needs assessment review and then review of state plan
  - i. What is the work plan including the goals and action steps to get there?
    1. Move through the assessments and have any questions addressed. Ensure committee members are secure in their understanding of the issues and services.
2. Rules of committee members?
  - i. To be present, engaged, and aware of any missing areas in need of assessment.

**Calendar**

Our new calendar year has begun, and the new calendar is complete. See the attached new year calendar.

**Membership at a Glance:**

Role	# of Members
Members Who Disclosed Disability in Application	11
Business, Industry, Labor Representative	3
Client Assistance Program Representative	1
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	2
Current or Former VR Applicant or Recipient	2
Disability Group Representative	4
Parent Training and Information Center Representative	1
State Educational Agency	2
State Workforce Development Board	1
Statewide Independent Living Council Representative	1
VR Counselor	2
Designated State Unit Director	1
Staff/ Liaison	3
<b>Total Members (including non-voting and SRC liaisons)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Voting Members</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Members with Disability</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Percent of SRC who are PWD</b>	<b>65%</b>

Please let me know if any ideas, thoughts, constructive criticisms, and compliments! I'm here to help this council, I'm here to help YOU! I hope you have a great holiday season.

Don't hesitate to call, email, or text if I can help in any way!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice".

Janice Leonard, SRC Coordinator  
Cell: 802-535-8631  
Janice.leonard@vermont.gov